

METTAWA, ILL. – Joining with horse enthusiasts and animal protection advocates at Shadowbrook Farm, U.S. Representative Mark Kirk called for a national ban on the use of double-deck trailers for the transportation of horses following an accident in Wadsworth last fall that killed 19 Belgian draft horses. In October 2007, a double-deck cattle truck carrying 59 Belgian draft horses overturned when the driver ran a red light and hit another vehicle on Route 41. Residents at the scene could hear the animals kicking and screaming, panicked by their inability to escape. Eight horses died on the scene while another 10 had to be euthanized – one died later.

“Double-deck trailers are built for cattle and pigs – not horses,” Congressman Kirk said. “It’s cruel and inhumane to confine horses in these trailers even without the danger of accidents. We know that about once a year an accident on the scale of the Wadsworth crash occurs in the United States. Congress needs to take the responsible act to ban double-deck trailers for the transportation of horses to prevent future tragedies.”

Congressman Kirk’s bipartisan Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2008 (H.R. 6278) prohibits interstate transportation of horses in a motor vehicle containing two or more levels stacked on top of one another. The legislation also creates civil penalties for violations of the ban. The legislation is endorsed by The Humane Society, Animal Welfare Institute, Hooved Animal Rescue and Protection Society and Communication Alliance to Network Thoroughbred Ex-Racehorses.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture states that double-deck trailers cannot transport horses safely: “We do not believe that equines can be safely and humanely transported on a conveyance that has an animal cargo space divided into two or more stacked levels.”

Animal safety advocates concurred. After the crash, Wayne Pacelle, President and CEO of The Humane Society of the United States said, “What a gory mess we saw recently in Illinois. It must never happen again...”

Congressman Kirk was joined by Humane Society of the U.S. Illinois Director Jordan Matyas, Hooved Animal Rescue and Protection Society President Donna Ewing, Denise Pumfrey with the Communication Alliance to Network Thoroughbred Ex-Racehorses, Shadowbrook Farm owner Tim Towne and Ron Herbes of Libertyville Horse Trailer Sales.

The full text of the legislation is below.

110th CONGRESS

2d Session

H. R. 6278

To amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate transportation in a motor vehicle containing 2 or more levels stacked on top of one another.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

June 17, 2008

Mr. KIRK (for himself, Mr. COHEN, Mr. REICHERT, Mr. WHITFIELD of Kentucky, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. RAHALL, Mr. KUCINICH, Mr. SERRANO, Mr. FOSTER, Mr. SHAYS, Mr. JONES of North Carolina, and Mr. MOORE of Kansas) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

A BILL

To amend title 49, United States Code, to prohibit the transportation of horses in interstate transportation in a motor vehicle containing 2 or more levels stacked on top of one another. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the `Horse Transportation Safety Act of 2008'.

SEC. 2. TRANSPORTATION OF HORSES.

(a) In General- Chapter 805 of title 49, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following:

`Sec. 80505. Transportation of horses

`(a) Prohibition- No person may transport, or cause to be transported, a horse from a place in a State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States through or to a place in another State, the District of Columbia, or a territory or possession of the United States in a motor vehicle containing 2 or more levels stacked on top of one another.

`(b) Civil Penalty- A person that knowingly violates this section is liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of at least \$100 but not more than \$500 for each violation. A separate violation occurs under this section for each horse that is transported, or caused to be transported, in violation of this section. On learning of a violation, the Attorney General shall bring a civil action to collect the penalty in the district court of the United States for the judicial district in which the violation occurred or the defendant resides or does business.

`(c) Motor Vehicle Defined- In this section, the term `motor vehicle' means a vehicle driven or drawn by mechanical power and manufactured primarily for use on public highways, but does not include a vehicle operated exclusively on a rail or rails.

`(d) Relationship to Other Laws- The penalty provided under this section shall be in addition to a penalty or remedy available under any other law or common law.'

(b) Conforming Amendment- The analysis for such chapter is amended by adding at the end the following:

`80505. Transportation of horses.'.